

# Transportation Advisory Board

of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

---

## ACTION TRANSMITTAL No. 2019-17

**DATE:** March 6, 2019

**TO:** Transportation Advisory Board

**FROM:** Technical Advisory Committee

**PREPARED BY:** Joe Barbeau, Senior Planner (651-602-1705)

**SUBJECT:** Program Year Change Request: Metro Transit

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Metro Transit requests a program year change to four projects funded through the Regional Solicitation.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Transportation Advisory Board approve Metro Transit's request to change the program years of four of its projects.

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:** As part of the 2018 Regional Solicitation, the City of Minneapolis was awarded a \$7 million grant as part of a \$17 million project to reconstruct Hennepin Avenue. This project and its timing (2023) has major impacts to a 2016 Transit Expansion grant awarded to Metro Transit to add expanded transit service on Hennepin Avenue. Therefore, Metro Transit would like to coordinate the timing of its project with the roadway reconstruction project so that new transit service does not open just ahead of a full roadway construction. Metro Transit would like to delay their 2016 Regional Solicitation award from 2021 to 2023 (see Table 1), the same year as the City of Minneapolis project.

Additionally, the delayed opening of the Green Line Extension and Orange Line limit the benefits of another 2016 Regional Solicitation project, the Lake Street transit expansion service since it connects with the other two projects. To get the most of this regional investment in Lake Street, Metro Transit would like to delay this project from 2020 to 2022.

Metro Transit can exactly fill the funding holes left with the requested shifts by moving up two projects awarded funding during the 2018 Regional Solicitation (Chicago-Portland, and Emerson-Fremont) as shown below. While Metro Transit would be able to advance the two projects, advanced construction is not an option for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) projects.

**Table 1: Proposed Program Year Changes**

Reg. Sol. Cycle	Project	Federal \$	Current Year	Proposed Year
2016	Hennepin Ave Bus/Tech Improvements	\$7M	2021	2023
2016	Lake St Bus/Tech Improvements	\$7M	2020	2022
2018	Chicago-Portland Transit Modernization	\$7M	*	2021
2018	Emerson-Fremont Transit Modernization	\$7M	*	2020

\* Newly-awarded projects that would be slated for 2022 or 2023 program years.

**RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY:** The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) manages the \$90 million annual program of projects programmed by the Regional Solicitation.

**STAFF ANALYSIS:** While the program year policy only allows for one-year project extensions, this is a unique circumstance in that Metro Transit is making a request that better-aligns several impactful transit projects with other nearby construction activities. Further, Metro Transit is providing a solution that does not lead to any unbalanced program years from a financial perspective.

**COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND ACTION:** At its February 21, 2019, meeting, the Funding & Programming Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval Metro Transit's request to change the program years of four of its projects.

At its March 6, 2019, meeting the Technical Advisory Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval Metro Transit's request to change the program years of four of its projects.

---

**ROUTING**

<b>TO</b>	<b>ACTION REQUESTED</b>	<b>DATE COMPLETED</b>
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	2-21-2019
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	3-6-2019
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Approve	



February 11, 2019

Elaine Koutsoukos  
TAB Coordinator  
390 N. Robert St.  
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Program Year Change Request

Dear Ms. Koutsoukos:

Metro Transit is pleased to be selected for project awards through the 2018 regional solicitation. To maximize the benefit of TAB's investment, and to closely coordinate with an awarded 2018 roadway project, a revised program year is requested for two Metro Transit projects programmed in 2020 and 2021. Newly selected 2018 projects can advance to these program years to maintain funding balance.

Last month, TAB awarded a roadway modernization grant to the City of Minneapolis for full reconstruction of Hennepin Avenue in 2023. This would closely follow the implementation of a project awarded by TAB in 2016 to Metro Transit for expanded transit service on Hennepin Avenue, programmed in 2021 and opening late 2022. Service expansion during heavy road construction is likely to impair Metro Transit's ability to attract new customers and deliver expected results. Shifting the transit project's implementation to follow Minneapolis' road construction would obtain better outcomes for the public. Metro Transit requests a shift of program year from 2021 to 2023.

Another awarded project in 2016 would expand transit service in the Lake Street corridor, currently programmed for 2020. The project will connect to major transitway projects including Green Line Extension (Southwest LRT) and Orange Line (I-35W BRT). The opening years of those projects has shifted since the 2016 application, now planned for late 2021 (Orange) and 2023 (Green). Delivering expanded bus service to West Lake Station ahead of the other transitway project openings would not optimize TAB's investment, so Metro Transit requests a shift of program year from 2020 to 2022.

To maintain program year balance, new Metro Transit modernization projects awarded funds in 2018 can shift to earlier program years, to 2020 (Emerson-Fremont modernization) and to 2021 (Chicago-Portland modernization). Each awarded project totals \$7 million of federal funding. Taken together, these shifts in project years will result in better transit service and increased coordination between projects selected for TAB funding across modes. Thank you for considering this change and please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Charles Carlson'.

Charles Carlson  
Director, Bus Rapid Transit Projects

CC: Mary Gustafson, Grants Manager

A service of the Metropolitan Council